

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

US House of Representatives – Washington, DC

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Spratt Honored by Veterans as “Unsung Hero”

WASHINGTON – The American Legion today named U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) an “Unsung Hero of America’s Veterans.”

Spratt, the Ranking Member on the House Budget Committee, was honored in Washington for his “extraordinary leadership in pursuing viable funding for programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

The award was presented by Sonny Singletary, of Cross, South Carolina, who serves as National Executive Committeeman. George Rollings, Legionnaire from Lancaster; Jimmy Hawk, Department Adjutant, of Columbia; and B.W. Bell, Veterans Service Officer of Kershaw County, also participated in the ceremony.

“I am honored to receive this award, but it comes from just doing my level best to see that what we have promised our veterans is actually delivered. I will keep doing my best, because I think these are promises we should keep,” said Spratt, who is also the second ranking Democrat on the Armed Services Committee.

Spratt has won consistent praise from veterans for the budget resolutions he has introduced as the Ranking Member on the Budget Committee. Last year, when House Republicans sought to cut (over ten years) \$15 billion from veterans disability compensation and \$14 billion from veterans health care, Spratt offered an alternative budget that restored the cuts and increased funding for veterans health care. While Spratt’s budget did not pass, it eventually led to a withdrawal of the proposed cuts to veterans’ health care.

The American Legion called Spratt’s budget “a much better approach toward reaching a balanced budget.” Four other groups – Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars – called the Spratt budget “a solid step forward in meeting the very real needs of veterans.”

This year, President Bush’s budget is \$1.2 billion below the funding level sought by Secretary Principi of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Almost all of this shortfall would come out of medical care and hospital services.

“Some veterans are having to wait months for care in a veterans hospital, and cuts of this size would only worsen the problem,” said Spratt, who is working on a budget for next year. “The budget this year is tighter than ever, but we will make veterans’ programs a priority.”

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